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En Pointe But Off Balance: Foot Deformities in Ballet Dancers and Need of Physiotherapy

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ABSTRACT

Ballet is a high-impact art that necessitates a good amount of physical stamina, strength, and stability. The biomechanical impact that ballet places on the body, particularly the perils of the feet associated with en pointe and demi-pointe, predisposed dancers to a variety of foot deformities. The most common foot conditions among ballerinas include hallux valgus, metatarsalgia, stress break fractures, and sesamoiditis. These deformities manifest as a result of strain, poor technique, and the intense physical demands of the dance. However, while these deformities can severely impair performance and life standards, they frequently go unnoticed by the general population until they become a significant source of pain.This review highlights the onset and prevalence of foot deformities in ballet dancers identifying the roles of intrinsic and extrinsic causes like anatomical predisposition, footwear and training intensity. Early intervention is very crucial in terms of injury prevention, pain management and rehabilitation. Physiotherapy plays a vital role. Physiotherapy deals with muscle imbalance, joint mobility and proprioception so the risk of chronic injuries can be decreased. With individualised exercise programmes, there are evidence-based therapeutic techniques like manual therapy and kinesiology taping that are best suited to the unique demands of this art form. Furthermore, this review highlights the need for the inclusion of physiotherapy into professional dancers' training routines to facilitate musculoskeletal health long-term. With focus on the interrelationship of biomechanics, foot health and performance optimisation, we aim to provide insights for dancers, trainers and healthcare practitioners through this study. It calls for a collaborative model involving various fields to prevent and manage dance-related injuries, allowing dancers to perform gracefully well into the future while avoiding the risk of life-altering and/or debilitating aberrations.

Keywords: Biomechanics, Injury prevention, Rehabilitation.